

?Canada didn't happen by accident and won't continue without effort?



By Brock Weir

Canadians can solve the problems we're facing by pulling together, even when faced with challenges south of the border, according to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The strength of coming together was the message Mr. Trudeau delivered to a large group of supporters at a fundraiser held in Aurora on Friday evening. The fundraiser, held at the Royal Venetian on Industrial Parkway South, was also attended by a number of area MPs, including Leona Alleslev (Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill), Kyle Peterson (Newmarket-Aurora), and Deb Schulte (King-Vaughan).

It was the end of a very busy day for the Prime Minister, which included a number of York Region stops, including one in Markham where he announced the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) has increased to keep up with the cost of living. Mr. Trudeau announced the CCB would be indexed to inflation earlier this year at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, a point that was not lost on the PM. ?The last time I was in Aurora, I was at a hockey rink and spent a little time on the ice with a whole bunch of kids and I got to talk to some of the parents about the impact the Canada Child Benefit has on their ability to buy new equipment, on their ability to fund after school activities, their ability to invest in their kids' futures, in a very positive way,? he said. ?What that has led to over the past year has been we have the highest growth rate in the G7. Canadians across this country have a little more confidence in where we are going.?

When the Federal Government brought in the CCB, Mr. Trudeau said one of the main criticisms the program faced from experts was without it being pegged to the cost of living, the monetary benefit each family received would lower with each passing year. It was a criticism he said his government heard but, at the time the program was introduced, the economic situation was such it was thought to take four years before they could index it.

The economy, however, has been ?going well?, he said, enabling them to bring indexing forward.

Mr. Trudeau's speech at Friday's \$500-a-head fundraiser laid out his vision for next year's Federal election.

He used the example of the CCB to poke holes in the views of critics that Federal Government under Justin Trudeau was ?a government of image and not substance.?

?Tell that to the hundreds of thousands of kids who have been lifted out of poverty,? he said. ?Tell that to the nine out of 10 families who are getting more money every month tax free to raise their kids. Tell that to the millions of Canadians who have a tax cut because we lowered taxes to the middle class. Tell that to the seniors for whom we have increased the Guaranteed Income Supplement by 10 per cent, almost \$1,000 for our most vulnerable seniors. Tell that to the young people who don't have to start paying back their Canada Student Loans until they are making \$25,000 a year in a stable job. Tell that to the millions of Canadians who have benefited from our historic investments in infrastructure right across the country over the past two and a half years. These are the things that actually matter to Canadians and actually shape not just confidence in our government but it is in the future we are

building together. That is what this government has been doing.?

This sense of continued nation-building as a collective was a common refrain within his speech, acting as a precursor to a 'positive' campaign ahead.

Mr. Trudeau said the Liberals won government in 2015 through a belief a 'positive, inclusive campaign' in which they refrained from mudslinging and attacking opponents and, instead, focusing on bringing people together instead of 'playing up the politics of fear and division.

'If we can demonstrate that we can go from a distant third place to winning government through the politics of positivity, then we change politics in Canada, and no one ever would think negativity, nastiness and attacks is the way to win government. That is what we told ourselves, and you know what? We did it, we won government by staying positive,' said Mr. Trudeau, before turning his attention to the Conservative opposition.

'The Conservatives didn't learn their lesson,' he continued. 'They still think the way to win government is to scare Canadians, it is to divide Canadians, to pit one region against another, one community against each other, to talk down our economy, to talk down our capacity to succeed as a country. I guess we're just going to have to show them once again that the power of positivity, of bringing people together, of saying, 'yes, we're facing big challenges, but we can solve them together,' that any old fool can point fingers and lay blame on this person or that group, or that region, for causing our problems. It takes real leadership and it takes the kind of conviction we see amongst Canadians to pull together and say, 'We can solve these challenges together, we have faced down bigger problems than this before, bigger challenges on a global stage than this, how we have succeeded and will succeed again.' And the only thing we need to do is stay focused and united.'

This unity, he added, will be important when facing trade challenges from the United States.

'Canada didn't happen by accident and won't continue without effort. That effort is not so much the government's, it's Canadians themselves. The responsibility we have as a government is to empower and encourage Canadians to succeed, to give them the tools to [realize] their dreams and create better opportunities for their kids, their grandkids, and their neighbours. That's the thing we have always done, that's the thing we have understood is happening when we come together, when we recognize that diversity is a source of strength, never a source of weakness. And the resiliency that comes with people rolling up their sleeves and working side by side is the one thing that is going to guarantee that our future will be better even than our glorious past.

'If I can thank you and all Canadians right now for the way we have pulled together in this latest challenge with the United States around tariffs. We will continue to stand up and be there for Canadian workers in the steel and aluminum industry. We lean on each other, we're there for each other, and we have got each other's backs. That is what I need you to do over the coming years. Continue to have each other's backs, continue to put forward a positive, inclusive vision of Canada, continue to point out that even with everything we have done, better is always possible and together we're going to get there.'